

Resource N: Post-Disaster Safety Checklist

Uncertainty about what and what not to do immediately following a disaster can intensify an already critical situation. Different types of disasters may call for different precautions before and during an emergency. Whether natural or man-made, the first priority following a disaster is the personal safety of everyone involved. Post-disaster measures can be taken to increase the safety of individuals affected by a disaster as well as those in positions to offer help. The following information is intended as a guide to protect individuals and their families in the immediate aftermath of disaster. This guide is in no way a comprehensive emergency safety document or plan. Local officials and emergency relief workers will arrive on the scene after a disaster, but depending on the damages, they may not be able to get to everyone quickly. Taking the precautions discussed below could prevent additional injury and damage, protect individuals and families, and make the home safe until help arrives.

For your personal safety:

- ☒ Check yourself for injuries immediately following a disaster. You will be better able to care for others if you are uninjured or have taken care of your own first-aid needs.
- ☒ Do not venture out until an “all-clear” is broadcast.
- ☒ Avoid drinking tap water and/or well water until local emergency management officials declare that the water is safe to drink.
- ☒ Avoid contaminated foods.
- ☒ Avoid touching fallen or low-hanging wires or trees and objects in contact with or near power lines.
- ☒ Avoid using elevators until advised by local emergency management officials that the elevators are safe.
- ☒ Beware of roads, bridges, and porches that may have weakened and are at risk of collapsing.
- ☒ Turn off all utilities to prevent further damage and minimize future hazards.
- ☒ If you are away from home when disaster strikes, do not return home until local officials say that it is safe to return to your dwelling.

- ☑ Open closet doors and cabinet doors with caution. Contents inside may have shifted and could fall causing further damage or injury.
- ☑ Use the telephone only to report life-threatening situations, and to manage and execute your responsibilities in the disaster.
- ☑ Check out damages in your home using a flashlight. Do not use lights, matches, or candles, and do not turn on electrical switches.